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INFO RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1760
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 1799
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1236
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 1642
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 2279
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 1540
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 2808
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 0417
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SUBJECT: FRANCE: MEASURED APPROVAL FOR NEW U.S. BURMA
SANCTIONS, OPENNESS TO TIGHTER MEASURES

REF: STATE 83719

Classified By: Political Counselor Andrew Young. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) France welcomes new U.S. sanctions on Burma and is open to strengthening existing EU sanctions as long as they do not interfere with provision of humanitarian aid, Burma Desk Officer Jeremie Petit said August 6 in response to reftel points. He added that EU experts are reviewing Europe's sanctions regime against Burma with a view to making them more targeted and efficient. "Our list of sanctions is as thick as the Yellow Pages," Petit said, observing that the challenge for the EU is to streamline the measures without giving the impression that it is lifting or easing them. Although France currently holds the rotating EU presidency, no plans are on the table for Paris to spearhead any new sanctions initiatives. The UK is seen as the EU leader on Burma; a tacit understanding exists among Europeans that "everything on Burma goes through the UK," Petit said.

¶2. (C) Poloff assured Petit that the United States has taken steps to ensure that assistance is reaching people in need in Burma. He stressed the importance of U.S.-EU cooperation and coordination on sanctions, emphasizing that in light of lack of progress toward genuine political dialogue in Burma, we need to take stricter measures together. Petit agreed, describing EU sanctions as "not enough." Individual countries' and the EU's efforts have not yielded the results we want. He advocated pushing for a UN Security Council resolution that would impose sanctions with the weight of international law. As for the JADE Act, Petit expressed doubt that new import and financial rules would be sufficient to get the Generals to see the light. Nonetheless, he praised the revamped visa restrictions as hitting the Junta where it hurts.

¶3. (C) Turning to the role of ASEAN, Petit said France would like to see the group do more on Burma. (Petit also handles Thailand and ASEAN Regional Forum issues.) He specified that in his view, Indonesia and Thailand should take the lead in generating constructive initiatives, particularly in the areas of human rights, good governance and social and economic development. With an embassy staff of two (an ambassador and counselor) in Rangoon, "these are things France can't do," Petit concluded.

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